



# Making It Happen

Evaluation

Round 1 - 2023



## The intentions of Making It Happen

The Making It Happen grant is an opportunity exclusively available to the acknowledged Community Health Champions in Stoke-on-Trent. With a focus on improving a range of health determinants within the city, VAST and Stoke-on-Trent City Council have worked co-operatively to help fund initiatives that bring people together and enable them to access necessary support services, take part in fun and interactive activities, and to make friends through the ability to share concerns and interests.

The funding intentions of the Making It Happen grant are precisely aligned with the targets highlighted within the Stoke-on-Trent Health and Well-being Board's Joint Health and Well-being Strategy (2021-2025). The specific targets acknowledged within this funding stream fit into the objectives of the 'Live Well' priorities of the strategy specifically. However, reiterations towards 'Aging Well' and 'Healthy City' have been met as objectives and outcomes of the first round of the Making It Happen grant.

The organisations funded within the grant's inaugural round are diverse and unique in their scope to meet the proposed objectives. Whilst a modest investment, the intentions are to create an awareness of vivid and prevailing issues within the communities of Stoke-on-Trent. To reduce pressures on the National Health Service and create a more prosperous and independent city, the approaches have included outdoor awareness and engagement, community lounge initiatives and support services for specifically highlighted issues within Stoke-on-Trent.

# An analysis of the outcomes

The Making It Happen project intends to support a range of issues that are most prevailing within the communities of Stoke-on-Trent. Per the Stoke-on-Trent Joint Health and Well-being Strategy (2021-2025), the projects funded have held a focus on meeting the priorities identified within the 'Live Well' section of the strategy, which identified a need to explore issues of mental health, physical well-being and implicating lifestyle factors, such as drug and alcohol misuse and smoking.

Whilst the projects have held a focus towards achieving the 'Live Well' outcomes within this strategy, the work also contributes to other principles of the plan, such as the Age Well and Healthy City priorities, which highlights the significance of each of the projects in reaching a range of individuals and groups across the city, with varying needs for support.

Each funded project has chosen to either increase mental health awareness or support access to services for residents; some have chosen to focus on both elements.

## Increase mental health awareness

Providing opportunities for individuals to open up about prevailing concerns impacting their daily lives and offer services and support that help to give understanding and actions to overcome such issues.

- Ensure people are listened to and have an open space to share any issues or concerns that they may have that impede an individual's mental health.
- Access to mental health services should be made clear and achievable for anyone who requires such a level of assistance. It remains a comfortable and confident conduit for individuals to receive the support they need.

## Support access to services for frail elderly

Offering many support services that residents can shape to ensure they meet the most prevalent challenges, providing positive and valued solutions.

- Older people should be provided with a voice on what services are provided and how they should be facilitated and developed to meet the needs of all.
- The services available should be made clear with a significant level of support being provided to those most marginalised within the community. The services should be open to all that require assistance and provided on the basis of identification of such issues.

# A look at the funded projects



## The Hub in Fenton

The community hub set up a new weekly service to support age-related and mental health issues. The service was supported by the city council as a Community Lounge initiative. The service provided access to activities and services that were not readily available to the community, such as physiotherapy and mindfulness.



## Fegg Hayes Futures

The community hub provided sessions including paper, card and decorative crafts, basic sewing machine skills, access to laptops/internet, board games and supporting adults with a comprehensive range of distance learning courses. The sessions were well-received, and the Hub would like to gain funding to offer a more varied session of activities alongside support.



## Beth Johnson Foundation

The sessions helped older people develop their digital and health literacy skills in a relaxed atmosphere. Participants were supported by volunteer Digital Friends and linked to health apps, health appointments, well-being, and community groups. The project aimed to ensure older people in Stoke on Trent had greater access to health and social care services.



## Urban Expressions Cobridge

The group provided a warm and friendly space where people could share their skills, learn new ones, and build relationships. The organisers wanted to support residents to feel part of something bigger, have a reason to get out of the house and improve their mental health.



## Human Nature Escapes

The project created digital well-being e-books that offer "virtual nature escapes" and encourage people to mindfully explore local parks and canals. The project also piloted two new ways to distribute the e-books: therapeutic slideshows in GP waiting rooms and walking galleries in local landscapes.



## Stoke Your Gratitude

The project partnered with a walking group in Stoke East to deliver Gratitude Walks for Well-being. The walks combined social walking and gratitude journaling, which are known to improve physical and mental well-being. The various walks helped residents appreciate their bodies and the natural world around them, opening up conversations about maintaining and improving physical and psychological health.

# Improving Fenton's Well-being

Live Well Healthy City



The Hub in Fenton has been working tirelessly to provide positive and meaningful activities that encourage valued interaction between residents and support for those who need it most.

In a 'Community Lounge' style atmosphere, the Hub has developed an emphasis on fun and positive engagement to bring people together to ensure they can access the support and services they need. Carole and the team have provided community meals, IT access and support and encouraged participation through arts and crafts, clay-work and interactive games.

A focus of the Hub's provision has been centralised around:

- Empowering and developing the volunteer base.
- Growing participation from more expansive areas of the city.
- Supporting housing and benefits queries.
- Bringing people together in activities that developed laughter and conversation

## Participant Feedback

The impact towards ensuring straightforward access to the activities has been evident, with participants feeling this was a significant reason for their engagement in the sessions.

The intergenerational approach, combined with the work to help reduce social isolation through interactive experiences, such as physiotherapy, has been critical to this success.

All residents engaging had stated that they had received many benefits after participating in the sessions, and their overall well-being has increased.



'More exercise after covid. Like talking to other people. It's a mint place to go'

Participant



# Enticing Stoke's Gratitude

Live Well Age Well Healthy City



Teaming up with a walking group has helped Stoke Your Gratitude to ensure the growth of well-being for Stoke East residents through the power of walking.

As a valuable learning experience for each organisation, the Gratitude Walks for Well-being project has been a flexible and empowering approach for residents to come together and interact positively.

The generation of a hybrid approach has witnessed the growth of cognitive-based gratitude training through journalling, utilised significantly throughout each walk.

The sustainability of impact that the project has held has been made clear by:

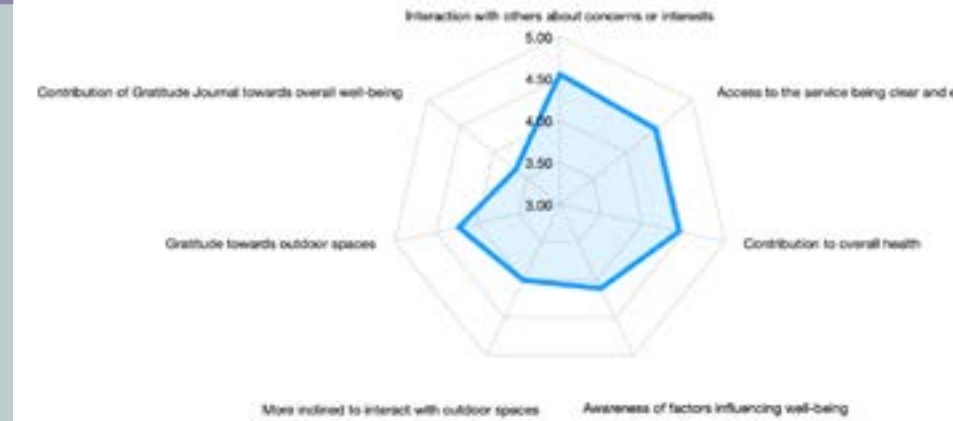
- Partnership working to help extend the life of the project.
- Incorporation of training as a valuable and sustainable resource.
- Expanding the reach of gratitude teachings to wider beneficiaries.
- Addressing the issue of active design within Stoke East communities.

## Participant Feedback

With an internal evaluation conducted by Stoke Your Gratitude and this external evaluation, we have found the Gratitude Walks for Well-being had the most significant impact towards accessibility, contribution to overall health and reducing loneliness and isolation.

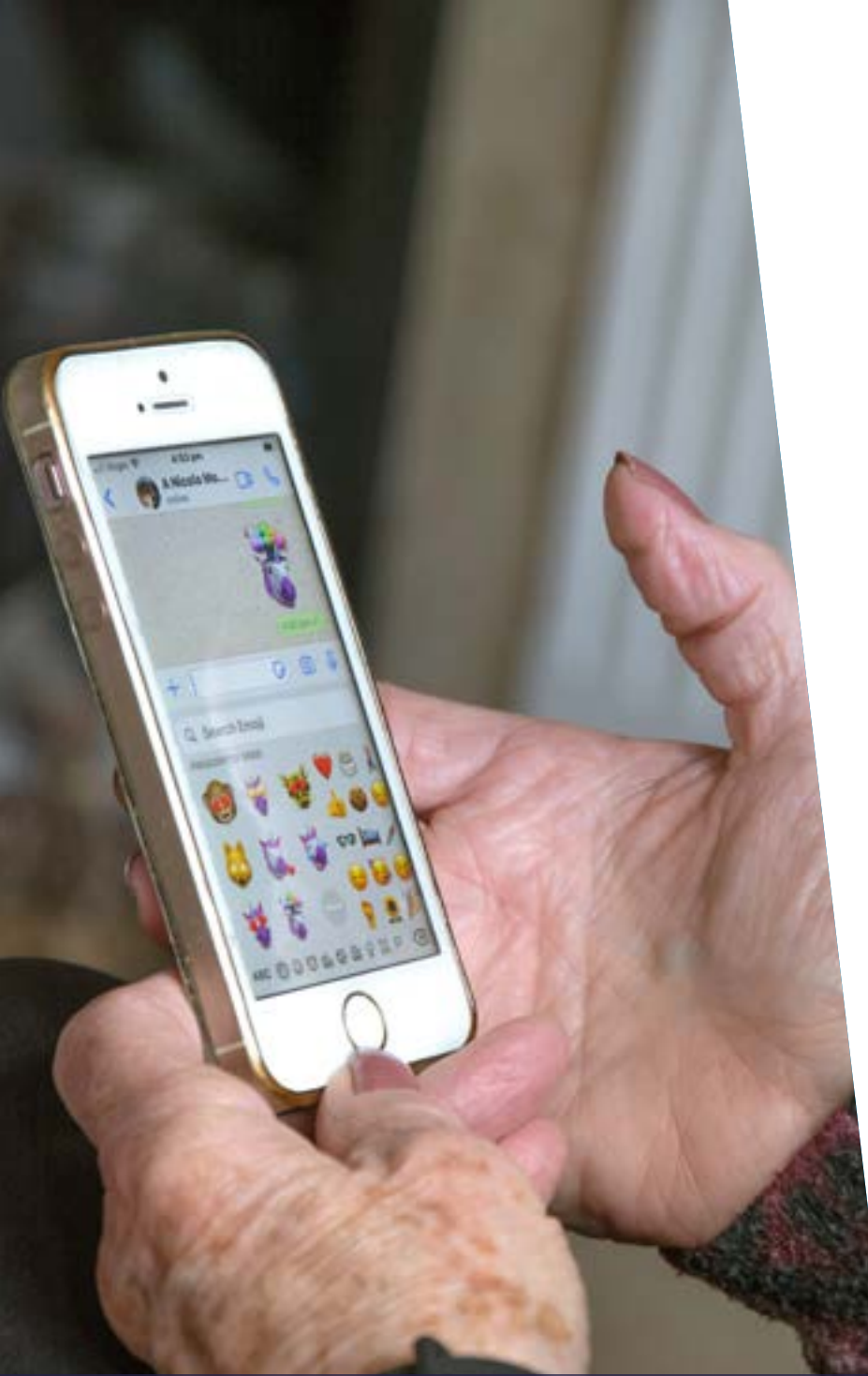
The journalling was a welcome aspect to most, with over two-thirds of those surveyed highlighting a significant impact of their well-being due to the journal.

Overall, the project has shown to have a substantial impact whilst also providing the delivery organisations food for thought around future initiatives and deliberations around the effects of the project budget as noted in the internal evaluation.



## Statistics

Type of Stat	Actuals
Total attendances	300
Hours delivered	30
Number of attendees	300
Average age of those benefitting	51-70



# Supporting Digital Inclusion

Working closely with those most feeling the effects of digital exclusion, the Beth Johnson Foundation has taken the initiative to combine the joy of interaction and the support needed through their Tea and Tech provision.

Utilising the approach to encourage positive discussion to share digital and technological experiences, Beth Johnson Foundation has enabled healthy well-being, communication, engagement and interaction to ensure their community feels valued and included. This has been achieved.

The appetite and need for this provision are strong. The initiative has seen an increasing and consistent level of participation, which provides an argument for this type of support provided to carry on and be continually funded to ensure positive outcomes such as:

- Growth and consistency of conversations amongst residents around issues of health and well-being.
- Reducing loneliness and allowing friendships to blossom through experiencing technology together.
- Developing confidence with technology to help perform the most necessary tasks using mobiles, computers and tablets.

'Getting knowledgeable friendly advice and support'  
Participant



## Participant Feedback

The most noticeable impact of the sessions has stemmed from the growth of interaction among residents to discuss concerns and interests, thus, allowing friendships to develop.

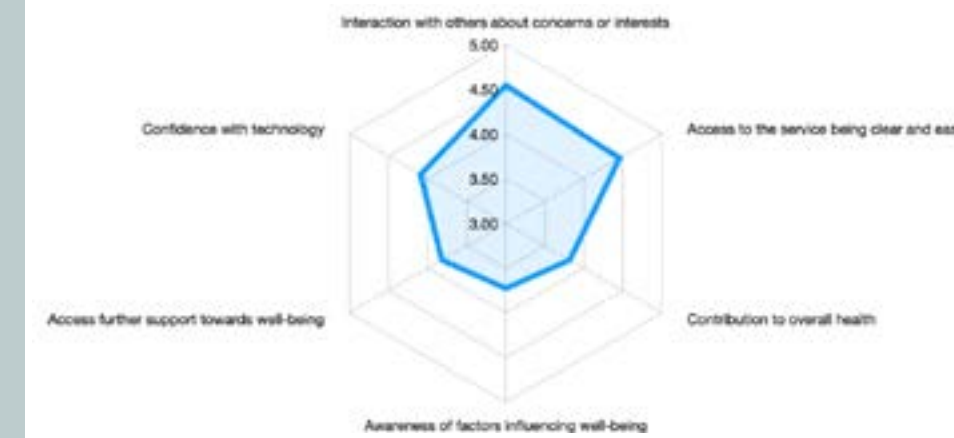
Whilst not significantly vital to the project's success, participants felt the awareness of their well-being could have been an essential outcome of the sessions.

However, it must be noted that the project's overall impact was significantly high and consistent among those attending.



## Statistics

Type of Stat	Actuals
Total attendances	28
Hours delivered	165
Number of attendees	9
Average age of those benefitting	71+



# Awareness of Nature

Utilising a unique social prescribing model to encourage individuals to become one with nature in the benefit of their overall well-being.

The project run by Human Nature Escapes successfully increased physical activity among older adults, utilising awareness through information sharing in various natural areas of the city. A survey of participants found that they walked more often and for longer distances after participating in the project. The project also helped increase social engagement among older adults, and participants reported feeling more connected to their community and making new friends.

A second aspect of the project surrounded engagement with GP practices through an informal social prescribing model. Offering opportunities to relieve pressure on GPs and a positive outlet for those who needed further support, the project laid the foundations for a consistent connection between seeking support and interaction with nature as the driver for help. This meant that more individuals became aware of the benefits of being within outdoor spaces with the incentive to aid their overall health and well-being.



## Focuses

- The project was created to increase physical activity and social interactions among older adults in the community.
- Human Nature Escapes placed QR codes around the community that linked to information, advice and guidance about local walking trails, parks, and other community resources.

## Outcomes

**Increased physical activity:** The project successfully increased physical activity among older adults in Stoke-on-Trent. A survey of participants found that they walked more often and for longer distances after participating in the project.

**Improved social engagement:** The project also helped to improve social engagement among older adults. Participants reported feeling more connected to their community and making new friends due to the project.

**Reduced loneliness:** The project also helped reduce loneliness among older adults, providing a positive incentive to interact with others within the city's outdoor spaces.

## Challenges

**Vandalism:** Vandals tore down some QR codes, making it difficult for participants to access the information they needed. The resources either required re-printing at cost or need to be replaced and moved elsewhere.

**Short funding period:** The project was funded for a limited time, which limited the amount of work that could be done, meaning that the foundations laid during this project may be difficult to continue without investment.

**Support from GPs:** Whilst interaction with some GPs has been achieved, difficulties have been shown when interacting with a broader group of GPs, limiting the awareness of the project and its intentions.



# Ensuring comfort

Fegg Hayes Futures have provided an initiative to support the residents in various ways, bringing people together to meet challenges and issues head-on through positive experiences, activities and conversations.

The team at the Hub have developed a community lounge to support the third generation most in need of support. This has included engagements with local counselling services, accessing surplus food, and offering financial and health advice.

The initiative's impact has also been centralised around offering significant signposting support after being welcomed to the centre by link workers, family support workers and even PCSOs, highlighting the project's considerable reach throughout the funding period.

The variation and flexibility of the initiative extended to the activities offered at the centre, which included arts and crafts, IT access, and workshops, as well as treasure-seeking exercises in the community to spread awareness of the support available at the community lounge. These have led to the following outcomes:

- Residents have been able to access a plethora of activities and support mechanisms.
- The initiative has been able to offer opportunities that they have yet to provide previously.
- A greater awareness of the support mechanisms and help within the community has been achieved.

Live Well Age Well Healthy City

'I have been able to access services to help with completing any forms'

Participant



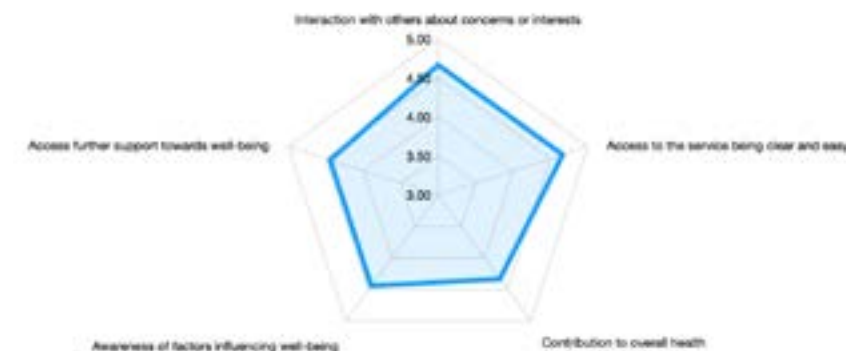
## Participant Feedback

The variation in the activities and support mechanisms being developed at the hub has enabled the project to hit a multitude of outcomes; the most prominent amongst participants being the interaction with others and accessibility to help and advice.

Residents engaging with the project had stated that they have been able to engage with necessary professionals, made new friends and access support in achieving any pressing lifestyle tasks that needed completing.



Statistics	
Type of Stat	Actuals
Total attendances	130
Hours delivered	13
Number of attendees	22
Average age of those benefitting	51-70



# Crafting in Cobridge

The Angel in Cobridge has been a central hub for residents with various needs and backgrounds to meet and enjoy informal activities supported by the Urban Expressions group.

Seen and utilised as a positive enabler to harness much-needed conversations and blossoming friendships, the Urban Expressions activity session in Cobridge has significantly encouraged residents from more expansive areas of Stoke-on-Trent to come together and take part in a range of activities, such as healthy smoothies and clay tile making.

The Coffee and Chat initiative has been shown to help people when they most need support, whereby residents have placed value on the opportunity to aid their skill development and open up with others about pressing issues affecting them in their daily lives. This has been an evident aspect of the project, which most residents have stated is why they attend so consistently.

In addition, the opportunity has helped to keep the Angel Hub in Cobridge open to the community and enable a greater awareness of the local support opportunities from within this centre, whereby engagement has led to the following outcomes:

- Awareness of the opportunity is increasing across multiple areas of the city.
- Residents feel confident and supported to overcome prevailing lifestyle challenges.
- Residents can make new friends and share interests and concerns with new people.

## Participant Feedback

Interaction with residents engaging with the Coffee and Chat opportunity has shown that conversations with others, access to the service, and contribution to overall health has been the evident outcomes of the opportunity.

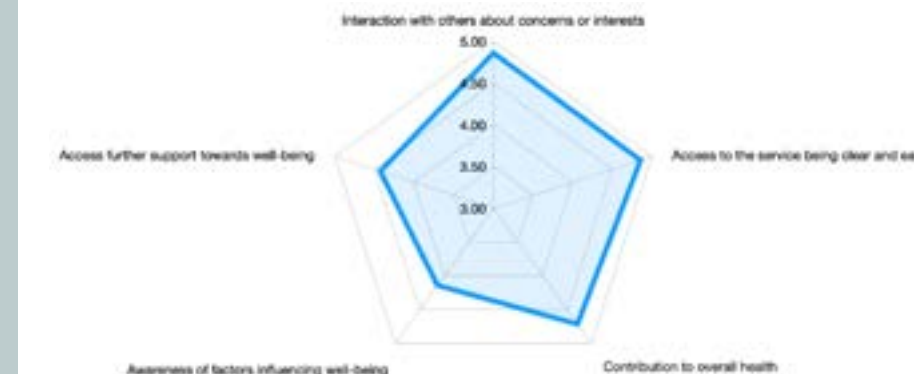
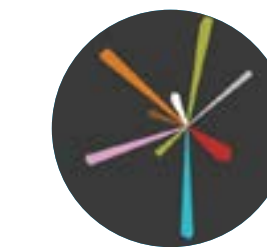
This has been accompanied by an overwhelming expression that having a structured time to share concerns and interact positively with others has been a critical indicator of consistency in engagement. Such consistency has increased the emotional well-being of those attending due to having a comfortable outlet to express worries.

'Getting out of the house, being more social interacting with others, enjoying in arts and crafts, improving my wellbeing overall'

Participant



Live Well Healthy City



## Statistics

Type of Stat	Actuals
Total attendances	20
Hours delivered	40
Number of attendees	126
Average age of those benefitting	31-50



## Case Study

A local community lounge provides support and resources to help people in need, such as (Person 1), who lost her son and struggled to deal with following financial issues.

(Person 1) is a resident in her mid-eighties who attended the community lounge through word of mouth. (Person 1) had recently lost her son, who was living with her and passed away suddenly in the home. Her other children live in Australia and London, and she relies on neighbours and friends locally. Due to the unexpected death of her son, she had been left with several bills and financial issues to deal with that she was finding difficult to resolve, and it had been suggested that the locality officer in the community lounge would be of help. (Person 1) attended the lounge for a 1:1 session with the locality officer, who sorted out her council tax, carers allowance and rent so that (Person 1) was financially secure; she had previously been very concerned about how she would go about sorting out all of these issues following the death. (Person 1) continues to come to the lounge every few weeks for a brew and a chat and calls the locality officer a 'miracle worker'. She now tells other residents in the community about the support. To put the case study into context, the community lounge came about due to a group of local Fegg Hayes Futures volunteers who recognised several individuals in the community with various health or social issues and would report these to staff, who would contact adult social care. As this happened more frequently, adult social care needed a regular session with a locality officer, and the community lounge was launched. It was these volunteers that (Person 1) called when she discovered her son, and they called the ambulance and comforted (Person 1) whilst the ambulance crew were in attendance. They have continued to support (Person 1), who now regularly attends activities at the Hub following her visit to the community lounge. The community lounge is no longer just a drop-in for people accessing support and signposting but has now got a regular group of attendees who attend for either craft, a chat, or to let us know that they are ok.



## Case Study

(Person 2), a 60-year-old woman, joined the Gratitude Walks for Well-being project and found it a transformative experience that helped her improve her mental and physical well-being.

(Person 2) is a white British woman in her 60s. She lives alone and often brings her beloved dog along for walks. Recently, she joined the Gratitude Walks for Well-being project to further enhance her mental and physical well-being. During (Person 2)'s first Gratitude Walk, the walk leader engaged her in conversation, asking about what was going well in her life and any upcoming plans. (Person 2) excitedly shared that she was going on holiday soon. The walk leader mentioned that he hadn't been on a holiday since the pandemic began, which prompted (Person 2) to recall her trip to Poland. This acted as an instance of retrospective gratitude for (Person 2), reminding her of the enjoyable experiences she had during her holiday. Her face lit up with joy as she recounted the memories, appreciating the opportunity to travel. The conversation about holidays stimulated a lively discussion, sharing travel experiences. This sense of connection and camaraderie fostered a supportive and uplifting atmosphere, helping to reduce feelings of social isolation and loneliness often experienced by older adults living alone. For (Person 2), the Gratitude Walks for Well-being project has been transformative. The focus on gratitude has helped her become more aware of the positive aspects of her life, fostering a greater sense of happiness and contentment. The walks have also enabled her to connect with like-minded individuals, providing a sense of community and belonging that has been invaluable to her overall well-being. (Person 2)'s experience with the Gratitude Walks for Well-being project highlights the profound impact of gratitude practices on mental health and general well-being. By participating in these walks, (Person 2) has cultivated a more positive outlook on life, forged meaningful connections with others, and improved her quality of life.



## Case Study

**(Person 3), a woman who struggles with anxiety, found a new skill and outlet for her creativity in the creative crafts project at the Angel community hub.**

(Person 3) has been coming along to our drop-in cuppa and chat sessions over the last year. She struggles with anxiety and often comes to sit in a warm, safe space to have free drinks and biscuits. She would often get distracted by her phone, but since starting our creative crafts project, she has come to life and found a new skill to engage in. We started using clay and making tiles to show what we love about Cobridge. This inspired her to make presents and items out of clay. She has even asked to take some clay and tools home as she says it relaxes her mind and lowers her stress levels. Her family have loved the gifts she has made for them and seen the benefit it has made to her. Along with others, she has been coming along to the Angel community hub on the other days that it is open to continuing making and painting her clay projects!

## Challenges

### Short funding period

Whilst each of the organisations found grateful value in the funding offered, they have expressed concern about the length of the funding period and the implications that may have on the development of their current project, with some organisations still building awareness and consistency in their projects. Despite all organisations achieving initial targets and outcomes through each of their initiatives, many have expressed a worry that the progress made so far will be dropped, leading to disengagement and disenfranchisement amongst those engaging and potentially those individuals unable to access the services they need. However, the organisations are keen to work closely with stakeholders as Community Health Champions to continue positively contributing to each community they serve.

### Differing age ranges than initially anticipated

The needs within communities are ever-changing, and often, needs can be felt cross-generationally. This has meant that some organisations have reported interacting with wider-age groups than initially anticipated. Most common within the community lounge-style sessions, the variety of age groups interacting has positively impacted the accessibility and sharing of knowledge pertinent to specific concerns. However, it has also meant that those in the target group who need a high level of 1-1 support from the initiative may have yet to be able to access such levels of support due to the varying needs of those attending. Despite this challenge, the organisations have met this with clear and concise support, utilising signposting approaches and increasing volunteer bases to ensure the skillset of the initiatives meet all individual needs with holistic responses.

### Illness, Anxiety and COVID-19

With the re-emergence of the implications of COVID-19 lockdowns, the sector has encountered an issue of anxiety experienced by residents to engage due to enduring concerns of catching the virus. In addition, some organisations have faced challenges with staff and volunteer illnesses, which have significantly strained the ability to run some of the sessions. In aims to reassure residents of COVID-19 due care and attention, the organisations have continued to showcase safe practices in sanitation. To overcome the challenge of staffing illness, organisations have offered alternatives to regular provision or provided support to those attending on a smaller scale.



# Meeting the Strategy

The projects have all contributed significantly to implementing the Stoke-on-Trent Joint Health and Well-being Strategy, working towards the priorities of the Live Well, Age Well and Healthy City Objectives.



## Live Well Promoting good physical and mental health, supporting people to maintain independence

The priorities within Live Well have been targeted throughout the initiatives. The walking-based initiatives have been central to encouraging an active lifestyle. At the same time, the community lounge-based projects have aimed to increase independence and encourage friendships to form and access the services they need. An example of this has been through The Hub in Fenton's 'Your Well-being is our Concern' initiative, which has offered many activities to encourage physical and mental well-being while providing a healthy and nutritious community meal.

## Age Well Living well into old age and providing the best care

Elements of the Age Well priorities have been acknowledged from most of the funded projects. The walking-based initiatives have supported encouraging healthy lifestyles as individuals move into the third generation. At the same time, the community lounge services have enabled older individuals to access the support they need to overcome challenges, encouraging self-determination to design opportunities for the needs of the individuals attending. An example of this has been through Beth Johnson Foundation's Tea and Tech provision, which has been straightforward and successful in enabling older individuals to overcome the implications of digital inclusion, thus, developing independence.

## Healthy City Building strong communities and living in a healthy home and environment

The foundations for contributions towards developing a healthy Stoke-on-Trent have been made throughout the development of the initiatives. The community lounge-based initiatives have been prevalent in helping people access services to improve their overall quality of life and safety, whilst the nature-based initiatives have helped to build community cohesion and support towards improving local amenities. An example of such stems from the work of Human Nature Escapes, who have adopted the development of outdoor spaces and a social prescribing mechanism to develop an awareness of the benefits of being around nature within the city for both body and mind.

# Mutually Recognised Outcomes

The outcomes of each project have shown to be wide-ranging and tailored explicitly towards the initially proposed intentions of the Making It Happen funding. Whilst they have achieved the results through unique approaches, they have all contributed to mutually recognised outcomes, such as reducing the implications of isolation, increasing awareness of the initiatives and improving access to much-needed services for the community. Below is a summary of each of those recognised achievements.

## Engagement from more expansive areas of the city

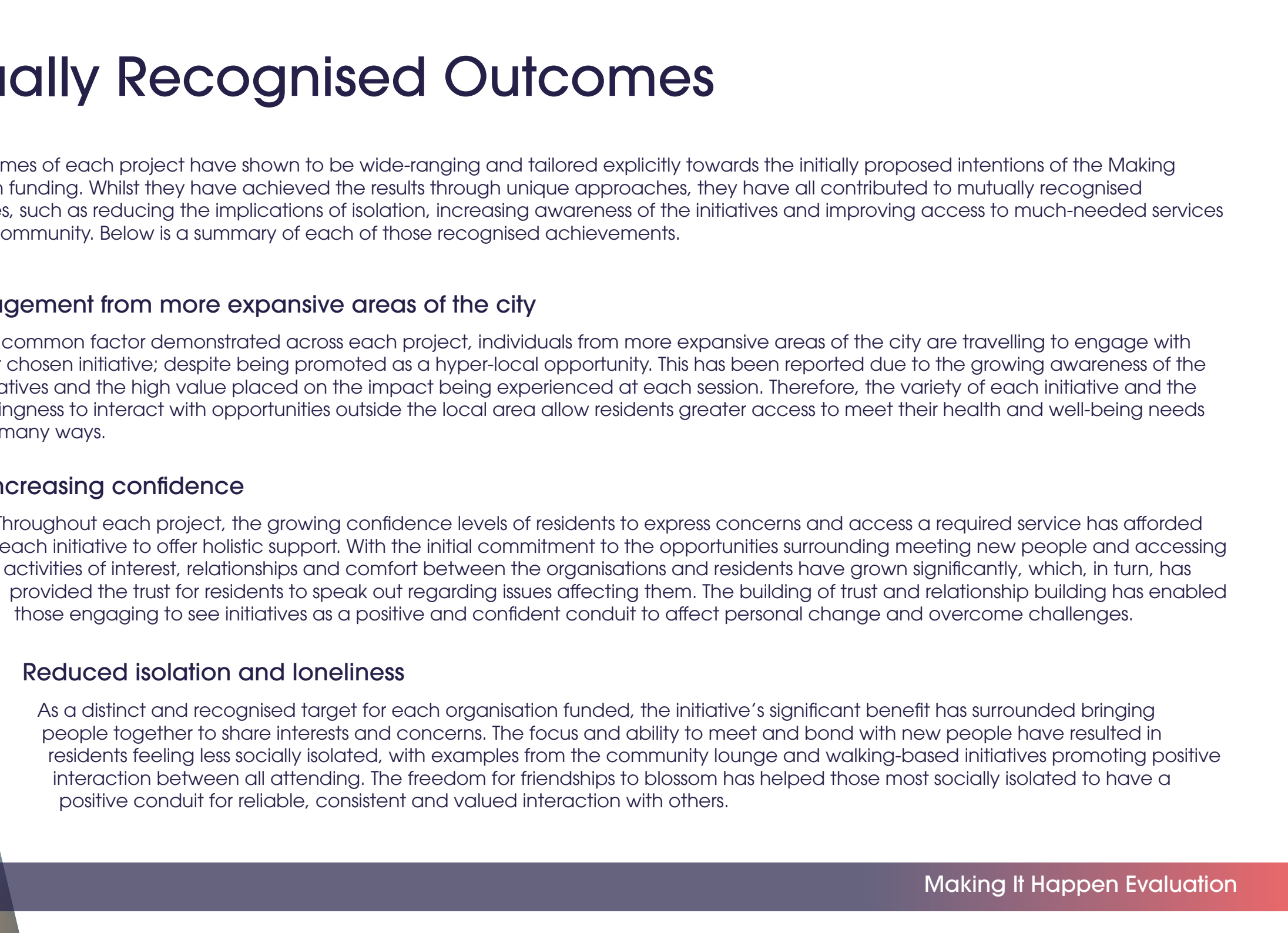
As a common factor demonstrated across each project, individuals from more expansive areas of the city are travelling to engage with their chosen initiative; despite being promoted as a hyper-local opportunity. This has been reported due to the growing awareness of the initiatives and the high value placed on the impact being experienced at each session. Therefore, the variety of each initiative and the willingness to interact with opportunities outside the local area allow residents greater access to meet their health and well-being needs in many ways.

## Increasing confidence

Throughout each project, the growing confidence levels of residents to express concerns and access a required service has afforded each initiative to offer holistic support. With the initial commitment to the opportunities surrounding meeting new people and accessing activities of interest, relationships and comfort between the organisations and residents have grown significantly, which, in turn, has provided the trust for residents to speak out regarding issues affecting them. The building of trust and relationship building has enabled those engaging to see initiatives as a positive and confident conduit to affect personal change and overcome challenges.

## Reduced isolation and loneliness

As a distinct and recognised target for each organisation funded, the initiative's significant benefit has surrounded bringing people together to share interests and concerns. The focus and ability to meet and bond with new people have resulted in residents feeling less socially isolated, with examples from the community lounge and walking-based initiatives promoting positive interaction between all attending. The freedom for friendships to blossom has helped those most socially isolated to have a positive conduit for reliable, consistent and valued interaction with others.



# Mutually Recognised Outcomes

## Improved mental health and well-being

The mental health and well-being of residents have been the priority of each organisation, which has been reported as a significant achievement within this funding period. Each of the initiatives has held a central focus on tackling the most prevailing concerns affecting residents head-on. With the ability to entice people to open up, discuss and express the worries that they have been facing, the participants have reported feeling listened to, supported and happier.

## Increased access to services

Each of the initiatives has been clear in offering a variety of services that meet the needs of residents, enabling access to support that would've initially been difficult for them to access. This has been achieved through the range of support mechanisms made available through this funding, such as debt advice, physiotherapy and technology assistance. An example stems from Fegg Hayes, whereby a local councillor has been general at the centre to offer support, an opportunity made otherwise tricky to access. This has been a common theme whereby all organisations have adopted variations of similar approaches.

## Hope and scope

Despite not being a targetted outcome, each of the initiatives highlighted that each of the residents had fun and could enjoy a range of activities. Whether it was through the interest in walking, clay-making or being able to try something completely new, the participants of each initiative have highlighted that the enjoyment being had at each of the initiatives was the main reason for continuously attending, with the ability to take their mind off issues and challenges facing through fun and interactive experiences. Ensuring the initiatives have an initial focus on fun and interaction enables conversations to flow and individuals to open up about their challenges leading to the ability to offer much necessary support.

# Stakeholder Perspective



## Cross-boundaries

The feelings around the impact of the cross-boundary reach within the city amongst the funded organisations have been mutually acknowledged. Both Sporting Communities and VAST have recognised this outcome as a significant reason for the programmes' success regarding the growing awareness beyond the localities in which each project occurs. The attention of the Community Health Champions has grown exponentially, with residents from expansive areas of the city interacting.

## Better co-ordination required between strategies

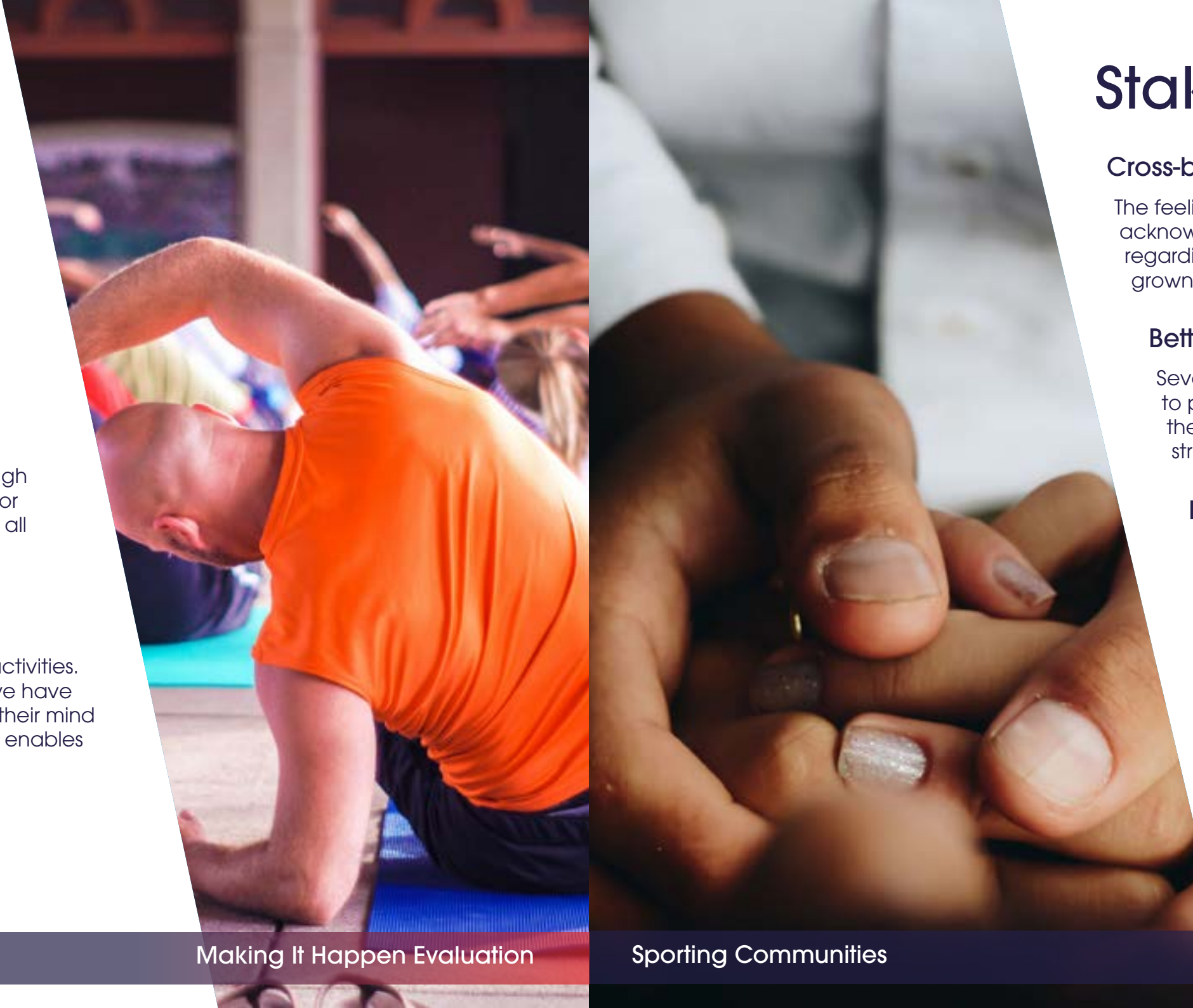
Several strategies aim to reduce the implications of societal challenges within the city. This spans health to the environment, employment to physical activity, and many more that need to be considered. Whilst the Community Health Champions' intentions are tailored to the targets indicated within the Joint Health and Well-being Strategy, the need to continue exploring collaborations between different strategies is essential to consolidate further and validate impact. Engaging with communities is vital to turn these strategies into practice.

## Networking between Champions

One of the mutually-recognised benefits has been the understanding and connections made between the Community Health Champions. The transfer and application of learning shared between the groups have contributed to the development of each project regarding the promotion, evaluation and approaches taken throughout the funding period. Access to suitable training workshops is critical to ensure the developing network successfully shares the learning and facilitates many necessary initiatives.

## Sustainability

It has been acknowledged that it could be challenging for organisations to continue their developed projects, and they may become demoralised that the amount of work put in could only be continued with substantial funding. It has been noted that challenges exist around organisations needing help to cover the expense of maintaining projects meaning that funding and impact for Community Health Champions posed a risk of becoming unsustainable. Despite this, the innovations adopted to support such initiatives are welcome and reflect the joint health and well-being strategy.



# Conclusions

So far, the Making It Happen grant has been demonstrated as a prime example of effective initiative development, utilising a variety of methods of approach to achieve mutual outcomes. The connections made between the organisations and the residents engaging has been a clear impact on the projects with the ability to provide fun and exciting activities, a wide range of supportive services that meet the needs of all and opportunities for individuals to relieve any pressures that they may be facing through conversation with new friends. Each project has demonstrated an ability to welcome people with open arms, ensuring increased confidence, independence and a growing self-awareness of mental health implications.

However, it must be acknowledged that this funding stream has also been met with significant challenges which require attention. The short-term funding has created a slight concern amongst the organisations towards the sustainability of the initiatives. Although some organisations can continue developing their initiatives through other means, they would also welcome further support if possible.

Despite this, the Making It Happens grant has been a welcomed and significant opportunity, and the impacts of such are being recognised across the city. The organisations have worked tirelessly to bring people together who require the most support, and the funding provided has been gratefully received and recognised as a vital input of investment and support to continue the great work across the City of Stoke-on-Trent.



Produced by:



On behalf of:

